

THE WHITE HOUSE
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES

Minutes of Meeting

Corrected and Approved

Session: First

Date: November 30, 1966

Place: Room 444, Executive Office Building
17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

The White House
National Advisory Commission on Libraries
Minutes of Meeting

November 30, 1966

The National Advisory Commission on Libraries was convened for its first meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 30, in Room 444 of the Executive Office Building at 17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. Dr. Douglas M. Knight, Chairman, presided.

Commission members present were:

Dr. Estelle Brodman
Dr. Launor F. Carter
Mr. Verner W. Clapp
Mr. Carl Elliott
Dr. Alvin Eurich
Dr. Herman H. Fussler
Dr. Caryl P. Haskins
Dr. William N. Hubbard, Jr.
Dr. Douglas M. Knight (Chairman)
Dr. Carl F. J. Overhage
Dr. Wilbur L. Schramm
Mrs. George Rodney Wallace
Mr. Theodore Waller
Dr. Stephen J. Wright

Absent was:

Dr. Harry H. Ransom

Also present were:

Mr. Douglass Cater, Special Assistant
to the President (For his opening remarks only)
Dr. Harold Howe, II, HEW/OE
Commissioner of Education
(From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.)
Mr. Louis Hausman, HEW/OE, Assistant to
the U. S. Commissioner of Education
(From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.)
Mr. Jerome N. Bluestein, HEW/OE
Administrative Officer, Office of the
Commissioner (From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.)
Mr. Melville J. Ruggles, Executive Director
National Commission on Libraries
Dr. Daniel J. Reed, Deputy Director (designate:
to enter on duty January 1, 1967), National
Commission on Libraries

I. Opening Remarks.

The Chairman called the meeting to order and introduced Mr. Cater, representing the President. Mr. Cater welcomed the Commission, expressed his and the President's pleasure that the Commission had been constituted and was present. He pointed out that this Commission differs from private task forces in that it is public; this means that it will be exposed to pressure groups and special interests, but also that the Commission's report will probably have greater and wider impact. Mr. Cater stated that one motivation for creating the Commission was the President's keen interest in achieving the most efficient and effective use of Federal funds, totalling \$600 million at present, for library purposes. He announced that it is his duty to serve as liaison between the President and the Commission and offered the assistance of the White House for any needs the Commission will have during its work.

II. Swearing In.

The Chairman next introduced Dr. Harold Howe, Commissioner of Education, who administered the oath to all the Members present who thereby assumed the duties of their office and convened.

III. Background, History and Goal of Commission.

At the invitation of the chairman, the Commissioner of Education related the circumstances and events which led to the creation of the Commission. Officials of the President's Science Advisory Committee headed by Dr. Hornig, and most particularly Mr. William Knox, Director of the Commission on Scientific and Technical Information, popularly known as COSATI, came to Dr. Howe and brought up the problem of the inundation of the world with information, and the inadequate means for making it readily available to researchers. Both Mr. Knox and Dr. Howe took the problem to Mr. Cater, who in turn referred it to the President. The President was quite interested, particularly since the Federal Government had invested rather heavily in this field. The President's interest and advice led in turn to the formation of a Commission. One important question--referred to the Commission itself--was whether the Commission, or some similar centralized body, should be a permanent part of the U.S. governmental structure.

Dr. Howe offered the full support of his Office to the Commission and its staff.

Regarding the Committee, also set up by Executive Order Number 11301 (September 2, 1966), Dr. Howe defined it as a "holding company" for the Commission, standing by to serve any special needs of the Commission which may arise.

IV. Discussion of Purposes and Goals of the Commission.

Dr. Knight, as Chairman, opened discussion by emphasizing the broad scope of the mandate given the Commission; the Commission is expected to delve into the basic and underlying factors controlling the general library problem facing the country. He brought up the practical fact that the full authorized complement of the Commission had not been reached by the initial appointments and that the Commission had the opportunity and responsibility to suggest to the President a number of additional persons (plus alternates) whom he might appoint.

Dr. Knight then opened the discussion of the objectives of the Commission, observing that the Commission would be examining the role of libraries within the entire range of the channels of communication for the next 20 to 25 years. The Commission could, he pointed out, complete its job by producing a routine, unimaginative report; but as Chairman he expected the Commission to produce an imaginative and constructive report. As an approach to this end, Dr. Knight proposed that the Commission look closely at the basic philosophical issues concerning the kinds of knowledge our society will need, how we obtain such knowledge, how it is communicated, how it is stored and retrieved, and how the entire system is best to be managed.

Mrs. Wallace spoke in behalf of public libraries, especially those of small and medium size. Both Federal and State governments have neglected such libraries. They need considerably more financial support than they have received, even with recent Federal legislation. Another problem is that these libraries have not adequately publicized what they can do for the individual and for society as a whole.

Dr. Wright observed that there are two phenomena which may revolutionize libraries: the widespread availability of inexpensive paperback books and the increasing use and accessibility of computers. He feels that one result may be the transformation even of modest libraries from centers for recreational reading into primary reference centers.

Dr. Hubbard pointed out the differentials between ideas and information and between education and decision making, which lead to a distinction between the traditional library function and the process of transfer of information. He feels that the Commission may find it necessary to delimit its field at some arbitrarily-chosen point between the traditional public library and the rather nebulous end point of the totality of information transferred.

Dr. Knight suggested, however, that even when the inquiry went beyond the boundaries of the library proper there would be an impact upon libraries at several points. He pointed out some metaphysical implications of modern technology, particularly electronics, as they affect varying dimensions of time. Here too there is an influence on libraries.

Dr. Haskins proposed two fundamental questions. One is the redundancy of information and how one sorts out ephemeral from permanently valuable information. Another is how to achieve "compatible thinking" throughout the country so that an individual near a small center would be able to get as fair access, or have as good a reservoir for this particular type of thinking as he could in Washington or New York.

Dr. Eurich brought up another basic philosophical question: the arrangement or classification of knowledge. New phenomena or concepts in this age do not fit neatly into the categories to which we have been accustomed. This problem seriously affects the classification schemes of libraries.

Dr. Wright suggested that two indexes are needed: an international index of ideas and an international index of knowledge.

Dr. Carter envisaged that new media and techniques of communication will alter the library so drastically that in 20 to 50 years it will be almost unrecognizable. He feels that the Commission ought to prognosticate what is needed for an effective transfer system in the future instead of seeking funds for support of present library functions.

Dr. Brodman stated that the first objective of the inquiry would be to discover the future needs of society for knowledge and how these can best be met before deciding upon the form of library service. She suggested that libraries should be able to adapt themselves to changes no matter how radical and that it is unimportant what a library is called now, because regardless of its future conformation, its primary purpose will always be to store knowledge of ideas.

Dr. Schramm agreed and foresaw all of the services which provide knowledge for this society being completely reorganized within the next 20 years. The Commission could hopefully assist libraries to move into tomorrow, while attempting at the same time to solve a number of interim problems.

Mr. Clapp alluded to two earlier remarks by Dr. Wright concerning paperbacks and automation. He felt that there is no doubt that the comparable and related automated processes will perform a great number of functions in libraries. Paperbacks have indeed revolutionized the communication of cities and communities in general. Yet these novelties do not have the significance many attribute to them, for all library work from the beginning of time has depended upon procedures (he mentions several devices and materials beginning with the invention of paper, photo-offset, photography and copying). None of the procedures of the past has ever been abandoned. Some libraries even today still contain and circulate cuneiform tablets. Mr. Clapp feels that books will not go out of use anymore than the cuneiform tablets have. Mr. Clapp feels that the important task of the Commission should be to examine thoroughly how libraries acquire, organize, and make available the "package of information" over which it has custody. He also feels that people should be stimulated to use libraries more often and more purposefully. Libraries must find new ways to exploit their riches.

Dr. Knight then asked how long a span of future time should the Commission postulate as a reasonable basis for its thinking. His query led to a lengthy discussion which ended in a consensus that about 25 years should be its horizon, providing that the Commission would not overlook more immediate and pressing needs.

Dr. Carter outlined some considerations which he believes very important for Commission's review.

1. What specific measures are required by society for immediate improvement and long-range development of intellectual access to recorded knowledge and information?
2. Are these measures parallel with specific measures required by society for improvement and long-range development leading to physical or technical access to recorded knowledge.
3. What are the fiscal, legal and administrative staffing support needs to meet these requirements? Not only must we determine what techniques can do but also how one develops the technical system, applies it, finances it, and otherwise administers it.
4. What are the logical obligations of the Federal Government for the implementation of these systems? What is now being done?

5. What kind or kinds of permanent administrative review are required to coordinate and otherwise facilitate an adequate information system throughout the country that will recognize the complex nature of the issues and sources of support.
6. What kind of research and development work is required? Where can it best be done? What are the deficiencies? What are the fiscal policies and administrative processes needed to obtain the necessary research and development?

Dr. Fussler suggested a group of topics for the Commission's program, as follows:

1. What is the current state and what specific measures are required by society for the immediate improvement and long-range development of improved intellectual access to information and recorded knowledge?

(This topic covers an extremely broad span of critical questions including such matters as the speedy cataloging of all titles of possible scholarly interest on a world-wide basis; bibliographies of all kinds; union lists of books and serials; indexing, abstracting, syntheses, annual reviews, summaries and evaluations of currently relevant data; information centers; systems of classification and subject cataloging; etc.)

2. What is the current state and what measures are required by society for the immediate improvement and long-range development of physical or textual access to information and recorded knowledge?

(This topic presupposes that for at least some time to come, and perhaps for the indefinite future, a two step process will be required to gain access to much pertinent information: first the process of determining what is pertinent, through the processes outlined under Paragraph 1, and secondly, locating the text in some suitable form, from some suitable source, and getting it into one's possession within a finite period of time. The two processes often blur into one another--e.g. browsing in a classified bookstack--but generally they are separable and are likely to remain so for many purposes. The issues have to do with such matters as the size, scope, and growth implications for libraries; the relevance of storage libraries;

regional, national or other back-stopping facilities such as the Library of Congress, the Center for Research Libraries, the National Library of Medicine; microtext and other systems of textual storage; on-demand copying and facsimile transmission; inter-library loan; wood-pulp paper preservation; etc.; etc.)

3. What are the functions and the roles of the library as an institution? In short, what are the informational needs of society?

(In a sense this question is subsumed under Paragraphs 1 and 2 above. If one has clear answers to the first two questions, one could then extrapolate the responsibilities of various different institutions and agencies.)

4. What are the most conspicuous current problems of libraries? To what basic issues are the problems most closely related? How can they most effectively be solved?

(This is an ad hoc way of getting a quick operational impression of underlying theoretical or philosophical questions. It would also deal with such problems as construction and physical plant needs that are not neatly assigned elsewhere.)

5. What are the fiscal, legislative, administrative, policy, staffing, and other requirements to meet the objectives outlined in Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3?
6. What are the current realities and the long-range potentials of technology for the improvement of library operations and for the storage, transmission, and accessibility of recorded knowledge or information? What is required to make the current and future technology available most effectively for meeting these tasks?

(This includes a broad range of technological possibilities including communications; network capabilities and limitations; facsimile and other forms of reproduction; photocopying; computer technology; printing; microcopying and duplication, etc. There are some very difficult and critically important problems in this area, e.g. copyright-- as well as a lot of loose talk.)

7. What are the logical obligations of the Federal government for implementation in the field of library support, bibliographical control, and information analysis and accessibility? What is now being done? What is the present legislation? How satisfactory are coordination, legislation and other administrative and policy facilities in relation to known needs? How adequate are these in relation to probable future needs? How adequate is the funding? What are the long-range funding projections?
8. What are the logical obligations of the private sector and of state and local governments and how well are they now coordinated with each other and federal responsibilities in the field? How is policy determined and shaped at the present time?
9. What kind or kinds of permanent administrative, review, fiscal, and policy-making structures can be created to coordinate, fund, direct (where appropriate), and otherwise facilitate the development of an adequate informational library system throughout the country that will recognize the role of the wide range of private, public and federal agencies and interests that are involved?
10. What kind of research and development work is required? Where can it best be done? What are the current research deficiencies? What are the fiscal, policy, and administrative requirements to insure the necessary research and development and its effective utilization in libraries and related organizations?

Dr. Wright noted the need for a set of working papers for the Commission, essentially a series of state of the art reports covering the most critical problems likely to concern the Commission. He feels further that the Federal Government should continue to be increasingly involved in the library problem. He feels that someone should provide the Commission with a survey of recent technical innovations with interpretations perhaps of what these mean for the immediate future of library development. He also felt that there ought to be some way of identifying the special trends in our society which influence the library needs with which the Commission would be dealing.

Dr. Knight asked Mr. Clapp if he could compile for the Commission a bibliography of completed research studies on various aspects of the library problem; Mr. Clapp agreed to take the matter into consideration.

Mr. Clapp, speaking on the point of "working papers," invited the Commission's attention, first, to a report on libraries prepared in 1876 by the U.S. Office of Education and, second, to a much more recent national inventory of library needs prepared by the American Library Association.

Dr. Fussler considered it important to arrive at an understanding within the Commission as to what kinds of influence it expects its report to have in such places as the White House, foundations, professional and academic groups, and libraries.

Mr. Waller inquired whether or not the Commission should not only add members but also engage the services of consultants who could add expertism in various fields to the Commission's deliberations.

Dr. Knight responded that he hoped that funds would be available to the Commission for hiring such consultants, while demurring about the idea of choosing Members of the Commission primarily because of their expertism. He presented a proposal which he felt might accommodate several suggestions made during the meeting: the Commission divide into panels, each covering one or more topics, which could be decided later.

Dr. Carter and Dr. Fussler expressed concern that the Commission might not itself be sufficiently informed about activities, especially in the U.S. Government, in the field of documentation and information handling. Dr. Fussler went further in suggesting that Members of the Commission are not wholly qualified to produce position papers on the subjects they will be handling and that therefore they should depend upon hired experts to study the problems for the Commission--the role of the Commission being to evaluate the findings of such studies, and to draw up recommendations based on the expert opinion thus derived.

Dr. Knight, impressed by the morning's discussion, proposed that such creative ideas as he had heard be put confidentially on paper by Members of the Commission, for circulation among themselves only, primarily for the purpose of formulating a more sharply focussed agenda.

Dr. Eurich undertook to summarize the morning's meeting under 14 headings or problems. The first group he described as:

A. Broad Philosophical Problems

1. Needs of society for kinds of services libraries can or have provided
2. Mass of new information
3. Sources of information
4. Nature of information, ideas, arrangement of information, all of which cuts across various fields
5. Handling and use of information

B. Specific Library Problems

6. Functions of libraries - different kinds of libraries: reference centers, educative functions, service of public libraries, dynamic nature
7. Range of equipment, materials, organized packages of information
8. Means of communication and their use in libraries for transfer of information, e.g., Technology, e.g., multi-communication media, especially duplication (first Xerox 914 Office of the President - March 1960)
9. Motivation for use of libraries, the resources are there but not used
10. Integration among institutions and within geographical areas:
 - a. Within a national system
 - b. In regions, within and between
 - c. Among institutions of various types and with various resources, such as schools, colleges, information centers, etc.
- Objective: Best utilize existing resources
11. Financing, not enough money to provide the services libraries can perform
12. Public policy. What legislation is required?
13. Who does what? Private sector, public sector, institutions, education and other
14. What happens after our report is out? What use will be made of it?

C. Assumptions

1. Time base of 25 years and stages of development of our plan

D. Working procedures of Commission

1. Spell out problems and issues; set restrictions and limits to our investigation; establish priorities; prepare set of working papers; problems and issues; recent innovations; aspects of society that determine library needs; take into account various relevant documents

Result: national inventory of library needs

Dr. Knight observed that the conclusion of Dr. Eurich's summary raised again Dr. Fussler's query: "Whom are we to reach?"

Mr. Elliott proposed a specific method of procedure: that the Commission invite about 50 experts in various aspects of the library problem to testify before the Commission. Picking up a suggestion by Dr. Fussler, he added that the testimony should be preceded by the submission, a week or two in advance, of statements from the specialists before they appear before the Commission.

Dr. Overhage recommended that each member of the Commission contribute his "favorite questions" to a pool, to be recast by the staff and circulated among the Members so that the Commission as a whole could then decide upon the most important and the most pressing issues.

Dr. Schramm suggested that the Commission proceed in four steps or phases:

1. Circulate to the Commission information on:
 - a. The changing needs of society for access to information
 - b. The possibilities of new technological developments
 - c. The present priority problems as seen by librarians
2. Determine exactly the subjects on which to concentrate attention
3. Conduct intensive research and inquiry
4. Make decisions and recommendations

Dr. Fussler thinks it is very important to study the advisability of creating a continuing body to pick up where the Commission necessarily will stop short. There are numerous complex and difficult problems which the Commission will not be able to dispose of to its satisfaction in a year's time.

Dr. Haskins suggested that the Commission filter out those problems which should be handled by such a body. Mr. Clapp added a suggestion that all members write down topics on which information is needed (Mr. Waller interpolated "and existing sources"), these to be distilled by the staff and perhaps lead to the development of working papers.

Dr. Knight agreed and asked each member to send to the staff lists of those issues considered to be most salient and crucial and also bibliographies of the major sources of information.

Dr. Knight introduced the problem of copyright which he felt the Commission could not entirely avoid since it is an obviously critical area, but also cautioned that it is a complex and highly political matter. Dr. Overhage commented that neither librarians nor academicians had had a sufficient voice in the Congressional hearings on the new Copyright Bill. Mr. Waller recommended that Dan Lacy be engaged by the Commission as an expert in this field.

Dr. Fussler felt that the planning of the Commission should be carried out in such a way that it can look at its recommendations concerning global library problems in such a time and manner as will permit it to refer back to the Federal legislation program and funding. Otherwise, the Commission probably will not meet some of the responsibilities that the President really has in mind. There is here a phasing problem: to try to examine how Federal legislation, funding, and operational structure relate to the findings of the Commission. They should be parallel.

Dr. Overhage asked whether "secondary literature" (state of the art reports, critical bibliographies, summaries, and reports of the various types in the primary fields) would be included within the scope of the Commission and Dr. Fussler replied in the affirmative.

Dr. Overhage responded with a comment that "secondary literature" needs encouragement on the national scale because in coping with the growing knowledge in any one field requires timely condensation of the material. Dr. Fussler replied that the aid of the U.S. Government and above all the latter's influence have not traditionally been extended to all cooperative indexing and abstracting services, e.g., Index Medicus, produced by the Federal Government is the principal bibliography in the field of medicine, but in chemistry an entirely different agency performs the work and in law still another.

Dr. Hubbard commented that the practitioner is not interested in the hierarchal pattern within which recorded knowledge is usually produced or stored. The Index Medicus is notoriously difficult to use because it is organized in the hierarchal system to which the producer rather than the user is addicted. Probably the use of a computer will be the answer.

Dr. Wright stressed the social aspects affecting libraries--such things as shifts in population and the problems of access that result. He stated that his primary concern is with children, their access to information, books and libraries.

Dr. Hubbard also mentioned that in his view the children come first; unless we can begin to provide the earliest type of access and satisfying contact of children with documentary materials, we will have failed to nourish at the root of the social system which is our concern. This problem of urbanized communities is particularly acute since the family structure is no longer a real base for introducing children to read. Probably, therefore, the problems of the public and school libraries are the most important issues before us.

Dr. Knight concluded the discussion by stating that the Commission had identified a spectrum of important needs that range from the crucial problem of informed human action in a time of worldwide social shift, through the problem of intellectual discourse which is no longer adequately treated within the standard disciplines, to the technical, revolutionary developments in information retrieval. He observed that these are the outstanding issues, that they relate to one another intimately, and that the Commission must address itself to them all.

V. Procedural Matters.

It was agreed that each member of the Commission would send to the Staff a list of topics considered to be of greatest importance and as suggested major items for the consideration of the Commission. It was further agreed that the members would submit lists of recommended reading. The Staff was instructed to collate these materials and to distribute them to the members. The Staff was also instructed to draft a press release setting forth a brief statement about the general orientation that the Commission took during its first meeting; this release to be cleared with the Chairman and given appropriate dissemination. It was generally agreed that the Commission would perhaps divide itself into several panels, each taking one or more major topics for intensive inquiry, these topics to be chosen by the Commission as a whole. These panels, the Commission hoped, would be able to hire the services of expert consultants for research when required. Furthermore, the Commission as a whole or separate panels thereof will invite specialists to testify concerning the various subjects within the Commission's responsibility.

The staff was also instructed to purchase a highly selective group of basic publications and send a set to each member. Mr. Clapp also requested an itemization of all Federal funds now available to libraries; he would like to see a report from the Office of Education showing the categories into which various laws in this area fall plus the authorizations and appropriation for each category.

VI. Administrative Details.

Mr. Bluestein of the Office of Education distributed to the Members certain documents required by law and regulations to be signed by members of Commissions, explained their content, and collected the signed forms. The documents in question were:

1. Confidential Statement of Employment and Financial Interests.
2. Certificate of Non-Membership (not required for Consultants currently on the rolls of the Office of Education).
3. Employee's Withholding Exemption Certificate
4. Certificate of Non-Residence in the District of Columbia (where applicable) - to avert withholding of D.C. tax
- or
5. District of Columbia Withholding Exemption Certificate only for residents of D.C.

Also for Commission Members who reside outside the Washington, D. C. area:

Travel Information Diary forms

VII. Additional Members of the Commission.

It was noted that there has been considerable criticism from various sources to the effect that the Commission is unrepresentative of various aspects of the library world. Most particularly it has been claimed that public libraries, state libraries and agencies, and school libraries were conspicuously neglected. While there was no full agreement that the Commission attempt to be fully representative, it was agreed that it would be highly desirable to increase the membership of the Commission to its full complement of 20 as set forth in the Executive Order. After lengthy discussion of types of individuals and the mention of numerous names, the membership agreed to send their nominations in writing to the Staff and the Chairman agreed to select from this list and present to the White House a list of approximately ten persons, the President thereby being given choice of alternates. It was recognized that only the President can make the appointments, and further recognized that he might choose not to add to the Commission.

VIII. Time and Place of next Meeting.

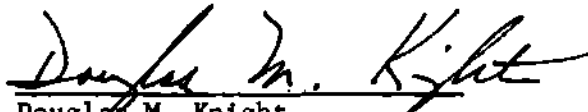
It was decided generally that it would be advisable and necessary for the Commission to meet approximately monthly. It was the consensus that Monday is the preferred day of the week. The date of the second meeting was established as January 7, the place to be New Orleans, Louisiana. Since many leaders in the library world will be gathered in New Orleans that weekend, the members agreed to make themselves available on Sunday morning, January 8 for interviews with officers and members of the Association of Research Libraries. The members also agreed to accept an invitation extended by the American Library Association to attend a luncheon at noon on Sunday, January 8 for the purpose of meeting officers and prominent members of ALA.

It was tentatively agreed that the date of the third meeting would be February 13, the place probably to be either Washington or New York.

IX. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m., November 30, 1966.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes and attachments are accurate and complete.


Douglas M. Knight
Chairman, National Advisory
Commission on Libraries

Corrected and approved by
the Commission at its second
meeting on January 7, 1967,
in Orleans Room, Roosevelt
Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Mr. Melville J. Ruggles
Executive Director
National Advisory Commission on Libraries